

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A method for storing and transmitting image data between occasionally-connected devices, the method comprising:
    - capturing an image at a sensor of a first device;
    - storing the image as image data in a memory of the first device;
    - separating the image data into separate color planes, according to a particular color space;
    - transforming each of the planes into separate bands, based on frequency information present in each plane;
    - quantizing each band of each of the planes to a particular bit depth;
    - coding each band of each of the planes for compressing the image data; based on quality and resolution provided by each band at a certain bit depth,
    - organizing the bands into a plurality of layers suitable for progressive transmission to a target device; and
    - upon connection of the first device to a second device, transmitting a selected one of said plurality of layers from the first device to the second device.
  2. The method of claim 1, wherein said particular color space comprises YUV color space.
  3. The method of claim 1, wherein said particular color space comprises RGB color space.
  4. The method of claim 1, wherein the image data stored in memory comprises mosaic image data.
  5. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of organizing the bands into a plurality of layers comprises:

organizing the bands into a plurality of layers of a quality/resolution matrix.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of organizing the bands into a plurality of layers comprises:

selecting one or more particular bands to comprise a given layer, each band being represented to a particular bit depth.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein each layer stores image data for rendering the image at a particular resolution and a particular quality.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein a first layer of said plurality of layers stores information pertaining to rendering the image at low resolution and low quality.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein said first layer comprises a subset selected from the smallest ones of the bands.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein said first layer stores each band of said subset only to a particular bit depth.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein each layer includes information from all color planes.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the layers are interdependent.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the layers are independent from one another.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein said transmitting step includes: transmitting attribute information indicating basic features of the image.

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21. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
disconnecting the two devices;  
at a later point in time, re-establishing a connection between the two devices;  
transmitting an additional layer of said plurality of layers while the two  
devices are connected; and thereafter  
disconnecting the two devices.

22. The method of claim 1, wherein said second device controls which layers are transmitted.

23. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of organizing the bands into a plurality of layers includes:

storing each layer as a record.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein each record is stored as a file in a file system of the first device.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein said step of organizing the bands into a plurality of layers includes:

storing a record directory for accessing a record for a particular layer.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein said record directory includes a directory entry storing a filename for each record.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein said second device sets the filename of a record to NULL after that particular record has been transmitted to the second device.

28. The method of claim 1, wherein said first device stores information indicating which layers have been transmitted to the second device.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein said second device has access to said information indicating which layers have been transmitted to the second device.

30. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

transmitting at least some of the layers to a third device; and thereafter retransmitting the layers at said third device to said second device.

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under control of said target device, transmitting selected ones of said plurality of layers from said source device to said target device.

37. The method of claim 36, wherein said target device initially selects a single layer for transmission that permits at least crude rendering of the image.

38. The method of claim 36, wherein said step of transmitting selected ones of said plurality of layers includes:

successively fetching layers that allow rendering of the image at increasingly higher resolution.

39. The method of claim 36, wherein said step of transmitting selected ones of said plurality of layers includes:

successively fetching layers that allow rendering of the image at increasingly higher quality.

40. The method of claim 36, wherein said step of transmitting selected ones of said plurality of layers includes:

occasionally connecting the two devices from time to time; and  
at each instance that the two devices are connected, transmitting at least one of said plurality of layers from the source device to the target device, until all layers have been transmitted.

40. The method of claim 36, wherein said step of transmitting selected ones of said plurality of layers includes:

connecting the two devices via wireless communication medium; and  
while the two devices are connected via wireless communication medium,  
transmitting a first one of said plurality of layers from the source device to the target device.

41. The method of claim 40, further comprising:

connecting the two devices via wireline communication medium; and  
while the two devices are connected via wireline communication medium,

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transmitting subsequent ones of said plurality of layers from the source device to the target device, until all layers have been transmitted.

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*cont* 42. The method of claim 36, wherein said first device includes an imaging device.

43. The method of claim 36, wherein said second device includes a computer.

10 44. The method of claim 43, wherein said computer includes a selected one of a desktop computer and a server computer.

45. The method of claim 43, wherein said computer includes Internet connectivity.

15 46. A system providing a file format optimized for transmission of information between intermittently-connected devices, the system comprising:  
a memory for storing image data;  
logic for partitioning said image data into successive layers, wherein each successive layer storing information that permits rendering of the image at increasingly higher resolution and/or increasingly higher quality;

20 logic for storing said successive layers in a file format, said file format comprising:

a plurality of records, each record storing information for a single layer, and

25 a directory for accessing a record of a layer that is to be uploaded to a destination device; and

logic allowing a destination device to control uploading of successive layers to the destination device.

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